

REMARKS

Favorable reconsideration of this application, as presently amended and in light of the following discussion, is respectfully requested.

Claims 1, 2, and 4-6 are currently pending. Claim 3 has been canceled without prejudice; and Claims 1 and 6 have been amended by the present amendment. The changes to the claims are supported by the originally filed specification and do not add new matter.

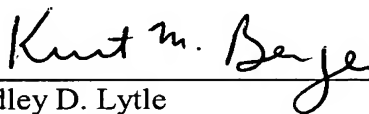
In the outstanding Office Action, Claims 1, 2, and 4-6 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 6,744,702 to Yonezawa (hereinafter “the ‘702 patent”) in view of “admitted prior art”; Claims 1, 2, and 4-6 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 5,696,742 to Ogata et al. (hereinafter “the ‘742 patent”) in view of “admitted prior art”; and Claim 3 was objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form.

Applicants respectfully submit that the rejections of Claims 1 and 6 under 35 U.S.C. § 103 are rendered moot by the present amendment to Claims 1 and 6. Claim 1 has been amended to incorporate the limitations recited in Claim 3, which was indicated as allowable. Moreover, Claim 6 has been amended to incorporate a limitation analogous to the limitation recited in original Claim 3. Accordingly, based on the indicated allowability of Claim 3, Applicants respectfully submit that Claims 1 (and dependent Claims 2, 4, and 5) and 6 are in condition for formal allowance.

Consequently, in view of the present amendment and in light of the above discussion, the outstanding grounds for rejection are believed to have been overcome. The application as amended herewith is believed to be in condition for formal allowance. An early and favorable action to that effect is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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